

You are the pioneer freeway, reminder in your sinuousness of the pastoral days of concrete, beloved to those of us who drive. And who doesn't! When we are trapped on the San Diego, Santa Monica, San Berdoo, Harbor, Foothill, Santa Ana Freeways, we long to lift our eyes and know that home is just across the dry arroyo that was your maiden name until -- like everyone else here -- you changed it, honoring the city you wear on your long and lovely self like a sprawling trinket.

Oh, Pasadena Freeway, we have loved you from the beginning, all of us who soon after Johnny's monologue raise our hands as if we were holding the sacred wheel and in our dreams negotiate your movie star curves all night long.

ON BEAUTY

It is conceivable The Incredible Melting Man just wants to get out of those wet clothes. But not likely: 2000 frames ago he saw himself in a mirror of standing water and knew he would never be held again or kissed goodnight by even the scuzziest.

I couldn't resist his loneliness, so during commercials I imagine an escape to Green Bay. The weather is superb. He gets a room, a Frigidaire, some rubber jeans. It is just another brand of grief: He likes this girl at the ice cream store but Spring threatens and during solitary sex his hand sticks to himself. She would scream like all the others and by June he'd be nothing but a raging pomade.

I know what's coming: high voltage wires ruled against the dawn. Good. Monsters should not live on. A rampage that lasts for years is just a job. And what's he to become, The Incredible Puddle?

Better let them lure you toward the transformer. Your lot is to be dreadful and to fry so that those of us who survive these long nights can sleep at last and dream the handsome dream and wake once more restored.